



Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Life in Music Institute
Nuwaidrat
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 21-23 April 2014

VO083-C2-R087

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the DVR's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Life in Music Institute (Life in Music) is licensed by the Ministry of Education and has been in operation since 2007. The institute offers courses in piano, guitar, electric guitar, voice, ballet and art. Learners on piano and guitar courses are offered the option of external assessment through a British or Russian curriculum. The majority of learners opt for the Russian qualifications. Most learners are aged 6 and above and are sponsored by their parents.

The Institute operates from one centre located in Nuwaidrat village and is managed by a full time director and an administrative assistant. A pool of eight teachers is deployed on full and part-time basis. During the last three years the institute enrolled 468 learners on various courses; 152 learners enrolled on year 2012, 178 on year 2013 and 138 until the review visit in April 2014.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over a three-day period, by a team of three reviewers in addition to three music and art consultant reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons, analysed data about the courses, examined learners' practical and other work, studied documents and materials provided by the centre and met with staff, learners and teachers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness, learners' achievements, the quality of teaching and training and the quality of programmes in meeting stakeholders' needs were judged as good. Support and guidance provided to learners and the effectiveness of leadership and management were judged as satisfactory.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 2 Good
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 2 Good

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Life in Music's overall effectiveness is outstanding, as are all other aspects of its provision except the support and guidance provided to learners and the effectiveness of the leadership and management which are judged as good.

Almost all learners demonstrate high commitment towards their learning and perform competently while performing in concerts locally and abroad. They develop highly effective skills and knowledge on the music and art. Their success rates for the past three years are constantly high. Learners are provided with excellent opportunities to enrich their learning through active participation on concerts and competitions. Teachers use their multinational experience and background to motivate and engage learners. Teaching is mostly geared towards promoting learners' self-initiatives and confidence. Teachers regularly assess learners' understanding and provide them with practical hints and feedback on how to improve further. At the beginning of a course, teachers assess learners' prior knowledge, skills and accordingly develop a suitable course to meet their personal abilities.

The range of Life in Music courses are selected from reputable international accrediting bodies based on the Russian and the British curriculum. These courses meet the needs of both the learners and stakeholders extremely well. In order to expand learning experience, the institute makes considerable effort in providing a global experience to all learners through a wide range of enrichment activities, including concerts and competitions that are held locally and abroad. Learners are supported and guided well to achieve their objectives. The institutes' teachers and staff are highly supportive and maintain good rapport with learners and their parents. Talented and gifted learners are provided with challenging pieces to play, hence, enabling them to reach their full potential. Learners are made aware of how well they are performing during the course and their parents are given detailed end of course performance report.

The management team is guided by useful plan that focuses well on fostering learners' music and art skills and meeting their parent's needs. The management uses their expertise and networking to enrich the courses. They use various events to collect views about the institute from stakeholders and the local community and address these adequately on their improvement plans.

Life in Music has good capacity to improve. The institute has undergone significant improvement since last review, and has addressed previous review recommendations well such as implementing very useful initial assessments and introducing a range of effective teaching strategies to raise learners' achievements. The institute has broadened its affiliation with international accrediting bodies such as Yamaha and Suzuki to introduce more music courses to meet specific stakeholders' needs. The number of enrolment during the past three years remains steady and reasonable repeat business with major clients is maintained. The institute has recently improved its physical resources by adding one more sound proof classroom and purchased an industry standard piano.

The self-evaluation form (SEF) provided for the review is critical and provides useful information about the institute operation and adequately identifies areas that it needs to improve.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Learners' achievement at Life in Music Institute is outstanding overall. Almost all learners at the institute develop pertinent musical and art skills in their own specialization and enjoy their learning experience. Talented and gifted learners participate effectively in the local and international competitions and events, and score best winning awards. Learners are highly enjoying these activities and provided with good attention and support. Learners show high commitment towards their learning and demonstrate the acquired musical skills competently while performing in concerts locally and abroad. Interviewed parents indicated that they are highly satisfied with the learning outcome of their children and the valuable music and art skills they gain.

The Learners Performance Data (LPD) for the past three years provided for the review show that approximately half of the learners sit for external examinations with the Russian and British external accrediting bodies. Success rates are constantly high with the vast majority of learners scoring merits and distinctions and achieve the qualification they aim for. An analysis of the progress report revealed that, almost all learners' progress extremely well, considering the level they start from and reach to. Additionally, music learners are developing highly relevant skills and progress effectively given their level and age group. The review team cited examples of learners continuing their study further in the field of art and music at international level, and others are given ample of opportunities to perform at concerts and events locally and at the region. Learners are highly engaged in their

performance and are able to work independently and show high level of pride and self-confidence. When provided opportunities at concerts, learners can work effectively together and share their learning experiences well.

Life in Music learners are always punctual and attend on a regular basis. Although the institute records learners' attendance on the teachers log book, punctuality is not recorded.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Most teachers are multinational and professional musician and artist. They are highly qualified and have relevant theoretical and practical command which is needed for these types of specialised courses. Each teacher has a wide repertoire in performance. Teachers rely on their background and experience to use a range of highly effective teaching strategies and practical activities to motivate and engage learners. From observed lessons, the style of teaching is mostly one-on-one where teachers utilise resources and range of available musical instruments to explain musical concept and link to real practical performance. They use relevant range of questions and answers to closely check learners' understanding and provide them with effective hints on how to improve their performance further. Teaching is mostly geared towards prompting learners to be independent and gain self-confidence while performing. Teachers provide ample opportunities to learners to practice musical pieces according to their abilities and progressively provide them with more challenging pieces to further their understanding and improve their singing and performing skills. Additionally, most teachers are highly aware of the individual learning needs and provide them with on-going advice to address those needs effectively which motivates learners to explore their learning potential further.

Musical courses lessons start on time, effectively planned and timely managed. Learners are always made aware about what they will learn. At the beginning of the course teachers assess learners' prior attainment and skills and accordingly develop a 30 week musical course that is personalised and has well-structure plan. On the other hand although teachers in the art use a dedicated and comprehensive lesson plans, the ballet lesson plan is general and the structure does not have a clear time allocation nor does it have clear indication about what learners' different needs are.

Teachers assess learners' performance continuously through in-class practical exercises and homework. Homework is thoroughly checked by teachers and provides learners with very

constructive reflection on their work. Detailed oral feedbacks are also provided during lessons; and occasionally teachers add relevant written comments on learners' notebook. Additionally, learners' evaluation form maintains very useful records about their progress and attainment on musical and art courses. Most teachers maintain very useful comments on how learners can develop further. However, in the vocal and ballet courses, the records are not sufficiently detailed to reflect on activities and assessment provided to learners. Teachers utilize the available learning resources very effectively to facilitate and enrich learning such as musical instruments, concert hall, books, mirror and notebooks pertinent to the subject.

How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Life in Music provides a wide range selection of music and arts courses that extremely meets the needs of a niche market; the institute's provision is largely focused on internationally reputable courses for piano that serve learners and parents' needs very well, along with other customized courses that are carefully selected. The institute offers Russian and British syllabi and most courses are designed to offer progression from basic to advance level. Courses are well structured and supported with high quality material that is up to date with clear assessment procedures. The institute relies on the management experience and the highly effective links they maintain with the local community, feeder schools and other relevant organizations to precisely determine and introduce the required courses. Highly suitable modern musical instruments are available at the institute; most instruments are of good industry standard and are well maintained

The institute makes a considerable effort in providing a global experience to the learners through a wide range of enrichment activities, including concerts, competitions and events that the institute organizes; these supports individual learners to build stronger foundation and nurture their knowledge and performing skills. The institute encourages all learners to participate regardless of their level. All courses are periodically updated and reviewed as per the external bodies' requirements. Some examples were shown of recent update of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the Russian curriculum.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 2 Good

Support and guidance at Life in Music is good overall. Learners are provided with effective range of support during their studies. The institute encourages and provides opportunities to talented learners to participate in competition and concerts locally and abroad. It facilitates an effective free rehearsal to prepare learners well for these events as required. Teachers and staff are highly supportive, committed and caring to learners, and maintain positive rapport with learners and their parents. Teachers convey highly useful verbal feedback to parents through one to one meeting about their individual children performance. However parents who do not respond to meeting invitation are provided with the end of course report only. Additionally, learners are made aware about their progress through a detailed oral feedback provided by teachers during the classes and some useful written notes on their notebook.

The institute celebrates gifted and talented learners with free gifts according to their achievement such as music books. Learners who have difficulties with their learning are encouraged to participate in local concerts and provided with extended course duration based on their abilities to help them achieve better outcome. The institute allows learners who do not have piano at home to practice at the institute during working hours. Learners opting for further education at the international universities receive useful counselling as needed, as well as guide them on best places to acquire or obtain their musical instrument.

General course outline is shared with stakeholders upon registration and stakeholders have access to brief on course information and useful teachers' profiles through the available course brochure and at the institute's website. Attendance is very flexibly planned with classes of different lengths of 30 minutes, 45 minutes and one hour to accommodate the needs of the learners and their parents.

The institute has highly inspiring and pleasant learning environment; which include a reception hall that is equipped with grand piano and learners' art works are posted at the hall. The institute has five classrooms for piano, guitar and vocals which are resourced with high quality musical instruments. One classroom used for both art and ballet lessons with good resources and special floor, mirror and equipment for ballet requirements.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 2 Good

The institute has a generic mission statement that focuses well on developing and fostering children music and art skills and talents. The management has a useful and detailed plan for their monthly activities with time scale that is specified along with the required action but no owner is assigned. Clear job description is provided for all staff and teachers. The current management structure is fit for purpose for the scale and nature of the provision. Leadership and management team of the institute are professional musicians who foster productive relationships with the relevant stakeholders to enrich courses. The management has an effective arrangement to closely monitor learners' achievements and progress. Teachers maintain highly useful records about individual learners' assessment for theory and practical work that are verified by the principal and shared with their parents. Qualified professional musician teachers are recruited on full and part-time basis, the quality of their teaching is verified through class observations carried out by the principal, and suggestions for improvement is shared with teachers and actions are monitored.

The management organizes annual master classes by an external examiner, to provide technical update for all teachers as part of their on-going development. The examiner also assesses learners' external examinations. The institute has a systematic internal quality assurance system; it includes clear policies, procedures and relevant achievements data is documented.

The institute maintains effective links with the local community through active enrichment events. The management uses these events to collect feedback from parents and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, one to one meeting are held with some parents to seek their views, and outcomes of these are gathered but are not always analysed to trigger improvement measures. The self-evaluation form (SEF) provided for the review is detailed, critical and provides sufficient information about the institute operation and areas that needs further improvement. The institute maintains highly pleasant learning environment, equipped with effective learning resources and essential health and safety aspects are addressed well.

The provider's key strengths

- Learners develop extensive musical and art skills and knowledge relevant to their specialization and achieve their objectives well
- Teachers are highly qualified and use an effective range of teaching strategies to assess learners' practical skills closely and provide them with very useful oral feedback to challenge them to improve further
- Highly relevant range of enrichment activities, including concerts, competitions and exhibitions to enrich learning
- Highly relevant internationally reputable range of music and art courses that meets the needs of a niche market extremely well
- The institute is run professionally and effective links are maintained with relevant stakeholders and the local community.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Life in Music should:

- improve the records of learners' progress and share with parents and learners regularly
- ensure that the views of parents and learners are collected and analysed and actions are taken for further improvement based on these views.